DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 257 189 EA 017 730

AUTHOR	Marklund, Sixten; Bergendal, Gunnar
TITLE	Trends in Swedish Educational Policy.
INSTITUTION	Swedish Inst., Stockholm.
REPORT NO	ISBN-91-520-0084-2
PUB DATE	79
NOTE	59p.; Translated by Victor Kayfetz.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Historical Materials (060)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Ability Grouping; Access to Education; Adult Education; College Admission; Early Childhood Education; Educational Administration; *Educational Development; *Educational Policy; *Educational Strategies; *Educational Trends; *Education Work Relationship; Elementary Secondary Education; Equal Education; *Foreign Countries; Personal Autonomy; Politics of Education; Postsecondary Education; School Location
IDENTIFIERS	Education Society Relationship; *Reform Efforts; *Sweden

ABSTRACT

This booklet describes the status of Sweden's educational system, its development since 1950, and the means for bringing about its reform. The first section gives a brief overview of education in Sweden at the end of the 1970's. The second section is concerned with the last three decades of development of Sweden's educational system, including discussions of the development of the school system as one part of the development of Swedish society, comprehensive school and upper secondary school, the accessibility of schools, student choice of a specialization, and equality between the sexes and freedom of choice. In addition, the following topics are covered: the schools and society; differentiation--a difficult issue; who makes decisions on the schools?; education for adults; universities and professional colleges during the 1950's and 1960's; higher education for new categories of students; and the location and structure of higher education. The third section considers the emerging pattern in Sweden of alternating periods of education and work. The strategy and instruments of educational reform, with focus on educational policymakers and administrative agencies, are examined in the fourth section. (DCS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED257189

Trends in Swedish Educational Policy

SIXTEN MARKLUND
GUNNAR BERGENDAL

EA 017 730

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Katrin Jonsson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Trends in Swedish Educational Policy

SIXTEN MARKLUND
GUNNAR BERGENDAL

THE SWEDISH INSTITUTE

3

This booklet came about early in 1979 on the initiative of the Advisory Group on Education and Research of the Swedish Institute. It is intended to give educationalists and scholars around the world some background information on the development of the Swedish educational system during the recent decades.

Sixten Marklund was for more than twenty years actively engaged as a teacher and administrator in the reformation of the Swedish school system. Since 1978 he has been a research professor at the Institute of International Education, University of Stockholm.

Gunnar Bergendal was the secretary of the 1968 Educational Commission which had the task of drafting proposals for the overriding planning of post-secondary education. Formerly a university professor, he has been the director of the School of Education in Malmö since 1973.

The authors alone are responsible for the opinions expressed in this booklet.

Translation by Victor Kayfetz

Design by Vidar Forsberg

1 Skr (Swedish krona) = US $0.23 or £0.11 (approx.)

Printed in Sweden by Bohusläningens AB, Uddevalla 1979
ISBN 91-520-0084-2

Contents

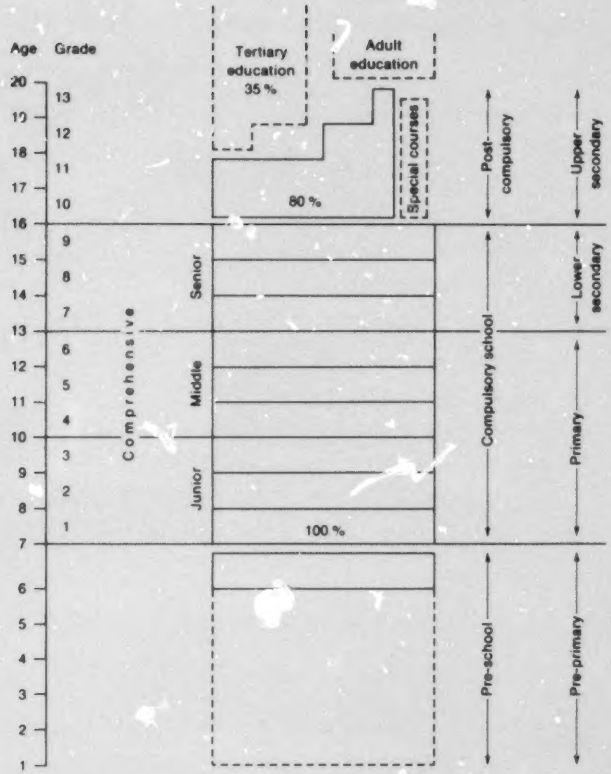
Education in Sweden at the End of the 1970s 5

Three Decades of Intensive Development 8
The Development of the School System as One Part of the Development of Swedish Society 8
A School for Everyone 10
The Schools and Society 21
Differentiation—A Difficult Issue 24
Who Makes Decisions on the Schools? 26
Education for Adults 29
Universities and Professional Colleges During the 1950s and 1960s 31
Higher Education for New Categories of Students 35
The Location and Structure of Higher Education 40

Recurrent Education 47

Strategy and Instruments of Educational Reforms 50
Educational Policy-Making 50
Administrative Agencies 53

School structure in Sweden



Education in Sweden at the End of the 1970s

Sweden has a nine-year compulsory school for students aged 7—16, known as the *comprehensive school*. It includes a lower primary (junior) level (grades 1—3), an upper primary (middle) level (grades 4—6), and a lower secondary (senior) level (grades 7—9). The comprehensive school has nearly one million students.

After this compulsory nine-year school, there is an "integrated" *upper secondary school* for students aged 16—19. Nowadays nearly 90% continue to the upper secondary school. Studies in this non-compulsory school are organized into 22 different "study lines" (specialties or majors) as well as a large number of special courses of varying lengths which provide direct vocational preparation. The great majority of upper secondary students are enrolled in the 22 study lines. These are grouped into three sectors: arts and social studies, science and technical studies, and economic and commercial studies. The lines involve two, three or four years of study. Most of them are vocationally oriented. By completing a line at upper secondary school including at least two years of study, a person fulfills the general admission requirement for higher education. This is also true of vocationally oriented lines, provided that they have included studies in the Swedish and English languages. The post-compulsory upper secondary school currently has about 250,000 students.

Pre-schools, for children under age 7, have existed for a long time. But only in recent years have they been extensively studied by government-appointed commissions and

become the object of political decisions. In 1975, Parliament decided that pre-schools should exist in all of Sweden's municipal districts (local government jurisdictions) and should provide places for all 6-year-olds in each district. This decision has not yet been fully put into practice. At national and local levels, the pre-schools are under the jurisdiction of the health and social welfare authorities. In other words, they do not belong to the regular school system.

Education for adults is provided on a fairly large scale in Sweden. At the *folk high schools* (which are mainly residential and for students aged 18 and up) there are about 15,000 participants each year in courses lasting at least 15 weeks, while shorter courses attract more than 100,000 people. Study circles operated by the *adult education associations* have nearly two million participants. Nearly 100,000 people take part in publicly run *labor market training* (job retraining). *Municipal adult education*, which provides instruction according to the curriculum of the regular school system, has about 270,000 students. In addition, trade unions and companies operate their own course programs. These statistics provide a rough idea of the magnitude of adult education in Sweden. The figures should be viewed in relation to the fact that Sweden has 8.3 million inhabitants and about 100,000 people in each one-year age bracket.

The *higher education system* has about 150,000 students altogether. About 10,000 are postgraduate students working toward the doctorate. Each year 35,000 students, i.e. about one third of an average age bracket, begin their studies within one of the study programs in the higher education system: e.g. medicine, nursing, administration, technical physics. In addition, a great number of students begin so-called single courses, which may be parts of a full study program.

The study programs within Swedish higher education—aside from those at postgraduate level—are of different

lengths. Medical studies require 5½ years, while other programs, for instance training of teachers for grades 1—3 or programs to train nurses or pre-school teachers, normally require 2½ years of full-time study.

Most of the higher education system is run by the State (i.e. national government), but particularly in the health care field there are programs run by municipal and county governments. These local programs, referred to officially as *municipal higher education*, often use the same facilities as the upper secondary schools.

Altogether there are more than 30 State-run institutions of higher education at more than 20 locations. (See map on page 55.) Research is concentrated at seven of these locations—Stockholm, Göteborg, Lund/Malmö, Uppsala, Linköping, Umeå, and Luleå. An institution of higher education normally encompasses all State-run higher education programs in one location. The most obvious exception is Stockholm, with its twelve State-run institutions of higher education. Eight of these are professional colleges within the arts, and some of them are very small.

The nine-year comprehensive school, the upper secondary school and adult education are administrated at the State level by the National Board of Education *(Skolöverstyrelsen, SÖ)*. The universities and professional colleges are mainly under the jurisdiction of another central administrative agency for the higher education system, the National Board of Universities and Colleges *(Universitets- och högskoleämbetet, UHÄ)*.

Three Decades of Intensive Development

The Development of the School System as One Part of the Development of Swedish Society

The creation in recent decades of the Swedish educational system as briefly described above should be viewed against the background of social development as a whole during the same period. In the mid-1940s, Sweden had a school system which, by European standards, was fairly old-fashioned and not particularly extensive. The compulsory elementary school was only six or seven years. After it came various types of lower secondary schools, attended by fewer than one fourth of all elementary school graduates. Only about 10% of elementary school graduates completed a secondary education. Technical and vocational training were correspondingly limited in scale. Fewer than 5% of each age bracket attended universities and professional colleges. This is the system from which the current one has developed over a period of three decades.

A circumstance of significance to reform activities in general has been Sweden's *political stability*. The dominant political party has been the Social Democrats. Between 1932 and 1976, i.e. for 44 years, they were in power practically without interruption, including brief periods in coalition with other parties. But for most of this time they ruled through a one-party Government, and for long periods they had the support of a majority in Parliament. By and large, the same political party situation has prevailed in the decision-making bodies of local governments, which have come to operate most of the school system.

Political stability has had its parallel in a comparatively *conflict-free labor market*. By means of their strong organizations and smoothly functioning negotiating system, labor and management in industry and in the rest of the labor market have generally reached mutually acceptable solutions. This has applied both to blue-collar and white-collar employees. Strikes and other industrial actions have occurred relatively infrequently. Unemployment has also been low.

An additional factor of importance has been the *growth of material prosperity* in Sweden during the same period. Industrialization and efficiency measures on the labor market, not least in agriculture, have contributed to a noticeable rise in standards of living as a whole. Using a conventional yardstick such as the Gross National Product (GNP) per capita, Sweden has climbed to the top level among industrialized countries.

If material prosperity has facilitated educational reforms, the same can be said of *social welfare standards*. By means of social welfare legislation and other kinds of welfare activities, there has been an effort to give everyone a share of social welfare, broadly defined. Unemployment insurance, basic old-age and supplementary income-related pensions, public health and medical care, child allowances and housing allowances are important examples of this. The reform of the educational system all the way from the pre-school level to the higher education level may also be seen as part of this welfare program. It includes such social benefits to students as free schooling and higher education, school health and dental care programs, free school meals and transportation, free teaching materials, study grants and interest-free study loans. These benefits are provided to everyone.

The development of these material and social welfare standards has gone hand in hand with the development of the educational system. Educational reforms have been regarded as both a necessary prerequisite and as a con-

sequence of rising standards in general. A growing number of people have demanded an increasingly long education. At the same time, it has become more and more difficult than before to move directly from compulsory school onto the labor market. Young people often have no other alternative than to continue their studies. A problem which has thus become increasingly topical in recent years is how to coordinate education and gainful employment in a way which is meaningful both for young people and for the labor market as a whole.

It has sometimes been claimed that reforms in Sweden, including educational reforms, have been possible or in any event easier because Sweden is a *homogeneous* country. No real conflicts due to differences in race, religion and language have been thought to exist here. A global comparison undoubtedly provides some support for this viewpoint. But conflicts of this type have not been lacking. Due among other things to a large-scale immigration from other countries to Sweden in the past 15 years, the multiplicity of opinions and value systems has also clearly increased. Every eighth inhabitant of Sweden is an immigrant. The homogeneity which may once have existed has thus been strongly reduced.

A School for Everyone

Comprehensive School and Upper Secondary School

Quite naturally, opinions on how to change and improve the schools and the higher education system have varied in Sweden just as in other countries. During the 1940s, when people began to question the traditional school system, views in Sweden were divided, too. These issues were examined by two major government-appointed commissions. The first of these more or less arrived at the conclusion that the schools could be reformed through

improvement and organizational coordination of the existing types of schools. The second commission wanted to go further and recommended replacing the prevailing system of parallel schools with a comprehensive school for pupils up to age 16. The Social Democratic Government presented the issue to Parliament in 1950. The legislature decided in principle on a set of guidelines for the continued development of the Swedish school system. According to the decision Sweden was to begin, during an experimental period of about ten years, to implement a new nine-year compulsory comprehensive school. This experimental project was carried out on a growing scale during the years 1950—62, and the project increasingly also included parts of the post-compulsory school system. By means of a series of parliamentary decisions both during and after this experimental period, there was a gradual transition from the old school system to the new school described briefly in the introduction.

According to the parliamentary decisions of 1950 and later, the main objective was to raise the general level of education. To accomplish this, the period of compulsory schooling had to be lengthened. At the same time, there was a desire to "democratize" the school system, by improving educational opportunities for previously underprivileged groups and by replacing the system of parallel schools at secondary level with a comprehensive system, thereby creating greater equality of educational opportunities. Furthermore, there was a desire to bring about pedagogical innovations in the internal operations of the schools. Practical training was to receive equal status with theoretical ("academic") training. In some respects, this set of objectives for the school system comprised both a social and an educational policy program.

Nowadays the goal of social equality is mentioned in practically all school laws and school codes throughout the world. But it is implemented in many different ways. An important aspect of social equality in (and by means

of) education is whether various social classes have access to education. The decision to introduce the nine-year compulsory school throughout the country increased this access in stages. In 1972, the nine-year compulsory school had been completely implemented. The different types of previously existing schools at lower secondary level had been abolished at the same pace.

A first and significant step in the efforts to create social equality had thus been taken: everyone had access to a universal system of compulsory schooling to age 16. In corresponding fashion but somewhat later in time, access to post-compulsory education increased. As the compulsory comprehensive school grew, recruitment to secondary schooling expanded. The existing study lines in the secondary school—the Latin line and the natural sciences line—were supplemented by a "general line" in 1954. In the early 1960s, these three lines were coordinated with the formerly independent technical secondary schools and commercial secondary schools into a new upper secondary school. At the same time, two-year continuation schools with technical, economic, and social study programs were established as a form of continued education following the new compulsory comprehensive school.

By 1970, recruitment to the existing upper secondary school (*gymnasium*) system had risen to about 30% of all young people of the appropriate age. At the same time, nearly 20% attended the new two-year continuation schools. This meant that about half of all young people had access to upper secondary studies.

Parallel with this, municipal vocational schools were expanded during the decade 1955—1965. Eventually 30—35% of the appropriate age bracket attended these schools. Beginning in 1971, a continuing series of reforms coordinated the various study programs within the gymnasium, the continuation schools and most of the municipal vocational schools into a new type of "in-

tegrated" upper secondary school. This school was designed to follow the nine-year compulsory comprehensive school. It includes a total of 22 lines and a large number of special courses.

The number of students who begin their studies in this "integrated" upper secondary school each year is now equivalent to about 85—90% of all 16-year-olds completing comprehensive school the same year. But the percentage who go straight from comprehensive schools to upper secondary schools is lower, and it varies greatly from one municipal district to another. In 1968, Parliament decided that all comprehensive school graduates should have access to continued education. This aim has been achieved, in that nowadays the upper secondary schools can provide places to everyone who applies to them. But about one third of these applicants are not admitted into the study line which was their first choice, but have to accept their second or subsequent choice.

How Accessible Are the Schools?

Access to education is an important aspect of social equality. But it is not enough that educational opportunities exist. They should also be *within reach* of the individual. Sweden has always had problems with uneven distribution of population, long travel distances and the need for boarding arrangements even in compulsory schools.

The new nine-year compulsory comprehensive school came to include the lower secondary level, previously known as the *realskola*, in which the teachers specialize in different subjects. At this level each school needs a certain minimum number of students and classes. This may require concentrating students in a limited number of schools, thereby making long journeys necessary even for students in compulsory schools.

It is characteristic of Sweden that students in grades 1—9 form one unit, the compulsory comprehensive school, separate from the subsequent non-compulsory upper secondary school for grades 10 and up. Lower and upper secondary education, which previously were often provided together, have been split up by the comprehensive school reform. The country is divided into comprehensive school districts and upper secondary school regions. There is thus always a particular comprehensive school and a particular upper secondary school for each student. In thinly populated areas, it is common for both comprehensive school students and upper secondary school students to have to travel up to one hour from home. There are also boarding arrangements for rural students, especially those in upper secondary school.

Each individual secondary school region cannot normally offer all study lines. The secondary school regions thus collaborate in creating larger regions for lines with few students in them.

The practical availability of schooling therefore varies. One part of the efforts to achieve social equality has been to provide comprehensive school students with free rides on regular public transportation systems or special school vehicles (where appropriate, also free room and board). Secondary school students who need transportation or room and board, regardless of the economic status of their families, receive special grants in addition to the general study allowance paid to everyone.

The Student Chooses His Specialization

One of the objectives specified in the 1950 parliamentary decision on the future development of the schools, and one that has often been repeated since then in school legislation and official curricula, was that the choice of study program should be a free one. The intention is thus that

each student and his/her parents should choose a study program from among those provided in the schools operated by the public authorities. A student should thus not be ordered by teachers or the principal to take a particular program or subject. Free choice of studies became one of the cornerstones of the 1962 Education Act. The practical implementation of this principle has had far-reaching consequences for the structure and function of the schools and the educational system.

One important consequence was that the concepts of Pass and Fail were removed from the compulsory school system. The system should be organized in such a way that it encourages the all-round development of the individual. In other words, the aim of studies should be formulated on the basis of the needs of each student. Another aspect of free choice is that repeating of grades has almost entirely disappeared from the schools. There are a few instances of students repeating a year, but as a rule only at the student's own request in connection with a change of study program. A prerequisite for free choice is more adequate educational and vocational guidance in the schools and expanded practical work training and vocational orientation periods outside the school as well.

Sweden is not alone in lengthening the period of compulsory schooling to age 16. This has been done in most industrialized countries since World War II. Nor is Sweden unique in its efforts to incorporate lower secondary school into its compulsory school system. On the other hand, Sweden and its Scandinavian neighbors are among the few countries that have consistently postponed tracking (streaming) of secondary school pupils into separate categories until after they have completed compulsory school, i.e. at age 16. A certain amount of room for elective subjects is given to students from age 13 beyond those subjects common to all of them. In addition, from age 13, students may choose between easier or harder course alternatives in foreign languages and mathematics. But

the main principle is that until the end of their compulsory schooling, students are kept together in undifferentiated classes, and that regardless of their choice of electives and course types in the compulsory school, they can choose either theoretical (academic) or practical study lines in their subsequent non-compulsory schooling.

The postponement of tracking came in several stages. During the experimental period of the new nine-year school in the 1950s, most experimental schools divided up the students from age 13 into various classes based on their choice of electives. Foreign languages were often the criterion for classification. A distinction was made between students with two, one or (at that time) no foreign languages. The two-language students (there were also classes with three languages) ordinarily also had advanced classes in mathematics, physics, chemistry and Swedish, thus constituting a kind of *realskola* within the framework of the experimental school. When the pilot program was later evaluated by a school commission appointed in 1957 by the Government at Parliament's request it was not the problems in these favored classes which received special attention. Instead, the commission found it most important to solve the problems of the students in other, less favored classes. The result was that in 1962, Parliament determined that eight of the grades in the nine-year school should be untracked. Not until the ninth grade would students be divided into different study programs, of which one (9g) was preparatory to upper secondary school, some were vocationally oriented, and others had a more general character.

The experience of the first few years of the 1962 school was, in some respects, surprising. In planning, it was assumed that about one third of the comprehensive school students in grade 9 would choose 9g, i.e. the theoretically oriented, pre-upper secondary program in the final year. It soon turned out that the number of students in 9g exceeded this proportion. After only a few years, half of all

students were choosing this program. Toward the end of the 1960s, two out of three students chose 9g. In other words, 9g was flooded with students while some of the other programs were chosen by so few students that they could not be organized. The shift toward theoretical—or academic—alternatives appears to have been due to a desire by students finishing compulsory school to leave open all the alternative choices for subsequent studies in upper secondary school.

Obviously it was difficult to satisfy the students' free choice in grades 7—9 while at the same time dividing up students into various study programs in their subsequent schooling in accordance with other, more general principles. In 1968, the Government and Parliament accepted the consequences of this trend by abolishing the tracking system also in grade 9 and thus in the compulsory school as a whole. Instead, it was made possible for students in grade 7 to begin a second foreign language (German or French) in addition to English or else technology, economics or art. But the novelty was mainly in the fact that these four alternatives became essentially equivalent in value for purposes of admission to subsequent non-compulsory schooling. There was no longer any 9g which was "better" than other programs.

This meant that the nine-year compulsory comprehensive school had become entirely untracked, which was regarded as a victory for the efforts at achieving social equality. But it also meant that, more than previously, tracking and individualization problems were moved from the administrative level to the internal, pedagogical level.

Measures to support and encourage individualized learning have been undertaken. Some of these have assumed the form of resources for internal differentiation, e.g. alternative courses in mathematics and foreign languages in grades 7—9. These can be regarded as the last remaining relics of the previous system of differentiated schools.

The main advantage of alternative courses is that as a rule they mean fewer students per teacher in these subjects. Their weakness is in the fact that with only two courses to choose from, it is by no means possible to satisfy the full range of needs for individualization of learning in these subjects. In addition, it has become clear that social class factors enter into the choice of alternative. Among students with equally good aptitude for mathematics and foreign languages, those from working class homes tend to choose the easier alternative while their classmates from more favored backgrounds choose the difficult one.

Another resource aimed at individualization is special education. It was established during the 1950s mainly in the form of remedial and school-readiness classes. Special education within the framework of the comprehensive school was further developed and differentiated during the 1960s. More types of special classes were created, for example reading classes, observation classes and classes for the physically handicapped, visually impaired and hard-of-hearing. The expansion of special education in recent years has also assumed the form of limited remedial instruction for individual students who otherwise remain with their regular class. An effort has been made in recent years to bridge the gap between special education and ordinary instruction, meaning that the schools have attempted to provide individualization within the regular class instead of differentiation by dividing up students in various groups.

Equality Between the Sexes and Freedom of Choice

Efforts to achieve equality between the sexes are a good example of how, in redistribution policy, we must expect confrontations between deeply rooted values and traditions within the family and society as to what kinds of social equality and equal opportunity we can and should aim for.

Among the first measures the educational system has consistently tried to enforce is opening all types of education to both sexes and seeking recruitment of both male and female teachers and other officials in the schools. Special girls' schools existed until the end of the 1960s and were finally abolished when the comprehensive school was introduced. All classes are now coeducational.

Another step has been to provide the schools with a selection of subjects and courses without regard to sex. In the compulsory school, boys and girls study the same subjects. Boys and girls receive instruction in wood and metal crafts as well as textile crafts. Boys have the same home economics courses as girls.

In practice, efforts to achieve equality are often in conflict with free choice. Most of the subjects taught in the comprehensive school are compulsory, but in grades 7—9 students may choose electives for 15—20% of their time. Boys and girls often make different choices then. Boys choose technology, while girls choose art and economics. The same is true of choosing study lines in the upper secondary school after age 16. Girls are in majority in the nursing line, the consumer line, and the clothing manufacturing line, while boys are correspondingly overrepresented in the motor engineering line, the electrotechnical line, and the workshop line.

Experience tells us that equality between the sexes in these study lines cannot be reconciled with freedom of choice. Proposals have recently been made to introduce sex quotas. Under such a system, students from the minority sex (e.g. boys in the nursing line) would receive priority over students from the majority sex in admissions to studies regardless of other qualifications such as grade-point averages or relevant experience.

Within the higher education system, a kind of sex quota is already being used in certain cases. In choosing students for training as pre-school teachers, male applicants are accepted in proportion to their share of total appli-

cants, regardless of whether their formal qualifications are lower than those of female applicants. The same is true of nursing school.

A clear shift over the decades in the meaning of the term equality can be noted. During the 1940s and 1950s, it often meant equality in the sense of expanded opportunities for everyone regardless of social class, geographical origins or sex. Open up educational opportunities for everyone, people said, and a leveling process will automatically take place. Longer schooling for everyone, postponement of tracking into different study programs, expanded opportunities to attend post-compulsory schools and democratization (broadly defined) of admissions to higher education were regarded as the high road to achieving greater social equality.

Nevertheless, these measures have only partly resulted in the equality that was intended. During the 1950s and 1960s, the first students to take advantage of the new opportunities were often children of already favored social classes. Students from these social classes who were previously excluded because they could not meet rigorous requirements now found an opening. Research has shown, however, that continued implementation of this open policy has gradually led to a certain change in recruitment to high-status programs after compulsory schooling. But in Sweden it took 10—15 years before the "talent reserve" of the so-called lower social classes began taking advantage of the new educational opportunities. When it is sometimes claimed that democratization of educational opportunities has a different effect than intended, i.e. that those with existing advantages receive further advantages, this is not entirely correct according to Swedish experience over twenty years of implementation. The increasing number of students entering theoretical and other high-status study programs has consisted essentially—albeit after a certain time lag—of working class children.

It should be noted, however, that this leveling process has both taken a long time and been on a modest scale. The previous, optimistic belief in "equal opportunity" has thus been partially repudiated. This is one of the reasons behind the shift in the definition of social equality since the 1950s. Equality should not be limited to equal opportunities to compete. Nor does it mean that everyone is to receive the same or similar instruction. Special help and compensatory measures for the disadvantaged are a necessary part of a school for everyone. Only in one respect does social equality aim at "sameness" among individuals: it tries to provide all individuals with the same general, fundamental civic skills, the ability to function as active, contributing members of society, a basic competence in communication, speaking, reading, writing and mathematics, a basic orientation in natural and social sciences and—above all—a belief and a confidence in their own worth and their own opportunities to continue a life-long learning process.

Underlying this partial change of views on social equality in Sweden is, not least, experience from the immigration wave of recent years. Of the country's 8.3 million inhabitants, nearly one million are now immigrants or children of immigrants.

The Schools and Society

One of the objectives of educational reforms since 1950 has been to provide the schools with a structure and contents which prepared the individual student for active participation in working life and society in general. In the compulsory school, this was expressed mainly in changed schedules and course plans. Social subjects instruction received more space—from local knowledge in the lowest grades to Swedish and international social issues in the highest. Civics as a special subject was assigned a certain

number of classroom hours from grade 4 all the way through the comprehensive school. The official comprehensive school curriculum published in 1962 introduced study visits to various social institutions as a compulsory part of instruction.

Contacts between the schools and the labor market were undertaken in a natural way in the study programs into which the last year of the new school system was divided. During the experimental period of the 1950s, on-the-job vocational practice was part of the program for students in vocationally oriented study programs in grade 9. In grade 8, students in practically oriented study programs could take part in 4—8 weeks of practical vocational orientation on the local labor market. The 1962 official curriculum for the comprehensive school placed a three-week maximum length on practical vocational orientation, but at the same time also extended it to all students in grade 8. Previously, students who had chosen theoretical subjects had received no practical vocational orientation. The curriculum published in 1969 abolished the separate study programs in grade 9. The three-week period for practical vocational orientation and study visits was shifted at that time to the last year of comprehensive school, since it would no longer be followed by any division of students into separate study programs during comprehensive school.

Much of the responsibility for creating links between comprehensive school instruction and working life and society was assumed by so-called vocational guidance teachers. Such teachers existed until 1969 in all comprehensive schools offering grades 7—9. They often performed part of their work at the local office of the Public Employment Service. Since the 1969 revision of the comprehensive school curriculum, educational and vocational guidance services have been partially shifted to the upper secondary school. Both types of schools have special officials in this field.

The types of schools which were the predecessors of grades 7—9 in the compulsory school—i.e. the *realskola* and vocational training schools—provided entirely different opportunities for links with working life and society. During the 1950s and 1960s, efforts were made to incorporate a broad social and labor market orientation into the program of the schools, using the schools as the site. This became a part of the school system, and the schools essentially assumed responsibility for it themselves. During the 1970s, the trend has been partly a different one. Not least as a consequence of public discussion on the supposed isolation of the schools, they have begun placing an increasing proportion of their programs *outside* their own walls. The opportunities for "school-weary" young people aged 14—16 to take part in school-supervised practical work on the labor market have increased due to the introduction of so-called adjusted study programs for individual students. There are currently proposals at hand which would allow all students in comprehensive school to receive 6—10 weeks of on-the-job vocational orientation. To a growing extent, people who are not teachers are being permitted to take over instruction, while in their undergraduate education and subsequent in-service training, teachers are receiving increased contact with other work besides instruction. If school links with working life and society were thus characterized in the 1950s and 1960s by an effort to "assimilate" them into the schools, the 1970s are characterized by "dissimilation," i.e. a transfer to the community at large of training and educational responsibilities that were previously regarded as the exclusive tasks of the schools and of teachers.

Links with society are not only achieved by putting special social subjects on the school timetable. They are regarded as one dimension of most subjects, a way of working as well as a separate field of knowledge. The structure of the schools, too, is of great significance to the

way students view society. Not least important is how the school functions in providing free choice and in combining theoretical and practical training, vocational and general subjects.

In the space of two decades, the post-compulsory education has grown from encompassing a limited selection of young people to encompass the majority. Over a brief period there has been a completely revolutionary change in the lives of young people aged 16—19. Underlying this change are factors similar to those that brought about a lengthening of compulsory schooling: the need for education and the lack of available activities other than education. The opportunities for 16-year-olds to find an opening on the labor market have become so limited that most of them have no other choice than studies. It becomes a matter of peripheral interest to them whether schooling is described as compulsory or voluntary.

Differentiation—A Difficult Issue

The issue of when and how students in the compulsory school should be divided up into different study programs—tracking or streaming—was the most widely discussed issue throughout the experimental period in the 1950s. There were two traditional viewpoints on this. One was that at an early stage, and no later than age 12—13, students should be divided up into so-called theoretical and practical orientations. The other viewpoint was that such tracking should take place as late as possible, preferably not until after compulsory schooling, i.e. at age 16. The issue was closely intertwined with that of free choice. Should students and their parents be allowed to choose freely, or should the school and its teachers be able to create special requirements for certain choices and thereby themselves carry out the distribution of students

into various study programs? As in the 1950 parliamentary set of principles, the 1962 decision was that students should have free choice.

The issue of tracking was also closely connected with the question of how to assign marks to students for their performance in their studies. Should any marks be given at all in the compulsory school and, if so, should marks be based on a fixed scale of achievement ("absolute marks") or on a ranking scale ("relative marks")? The curricula published in 1962 and 1969 have resulted in a major reduction in the use of marks at primary levels, and in some schools marks have disappeared entirely at these levels because the local school board has abolished them. But in grades 7—9 of the compulsory school, i.e. at lower secondary level, marks are still used. Final marks are also crucial to students who have chosen a study line at upper secondary school where the number of places is smaller than the number of applicants and a selection is therefore necessary. There is a five-point scale of marks, on which 1 is lowest and 5 is highest on a relative basis for the country as a whole. To help arrive at norms for assigning marks, nationally standardized tests are given in Swedish, foreign languages and mathematics in the comprehensive school. At the upper secondary level, standardized tests are administered at all schools throughout the country in a number of additional theoretical skill subjects. These tests are compulsory only in the upper secondary school.

The establishment of these rules in 1962 was based on a compromise within the government-appointed school commission which in 1957 was asked to evaluate the experimental programs. According to this compromise, known as the Visby Agreement, tracking of compulsory school students would not take place until their final year. But it would be preceded by a free choice of subjects and courses during the two grades preceding the final year.

The compromise was accepted by the teachers' organizations, except for teachers in secondary-level theoretical

subjects. They wanted tracking during the entire lower secondary stage, i.e. grades 7—9, into different classes based on electives. According to their proposal, students in the nine-year school would all be in the same class only during grades 1—6, and after that would be divided into study programs. This proposal received parliamentary support only from the Conservative party. The other political parties mainly followed the compromise, which thus became the basis for Parliament's decision. As mentioned above, a subsequent parliamentary decision entirely abolished tracking in grade 9 as of 1969. Public debate on tracking since then has gone in waves, sometimes lively and sometimes subdued. But it has never died out completely. Since 1976 in particular, it gained new life in connection with the recommendations of a government-appointed commission on the internal work of the schools, and the revisions of the comprehensive school curriculum these recommendations required. Another important factor was the transfer of power from the Social Democrats to a coalition Government of non-socialist parties the same year. Public debate has, among other things, come to deal with the question of whether the school system created in Sweden by the educational reforms of recent decades is capable of taking advantage of and helping so-called gifted students.

Who Makes Decisions on the Schools?

The old seven-year elementary schools were municipal. The secondary schools were State-run. Municipally operated secondary schools also gradually came into existence, parallel with the State secondary schools and offering instruction up to the so-called *studentexamen*, which qualified a person to enter university-level studies. Vocational education was mainly a municipal responsi-

bility from the start and was created for students at the same age levels as those in the State secondary schools.

A series of parliamentary decisions during the 1950s and 1960s made the entire reformed educational system from pre-school up to and including upper secondary school into a municipally run system. There were few exceptions: certain special schools for the handicapped and some private schools. The latter, which at secondary levels also included company training programs, have existed on a very limited scale in Sweden. Altogether only 1% or so of all students at compulsory school and upper secondary levels have attended private or company schools.

One of the most important results of educational reforms was thus that the school system became a *municipal* responsibility. This was regarded as one of the significant steps toward a democratization of education through increased local influence. The balance between State and municipal influences on the development and structure of the educational system has been a much-debated topic during the 1960s and 1970s. It has been regarded as the task of the national government and its agencies to achieve a *uniform structure* in the educational system. Uniformity has been viewed as a prerequisite for *equal educational standards*. This uniformity has largely been achieved. Cities and rural areas have attained the same school structure as a result of reforms during the 1950s and 1960s. Urban and rural areas have schools that provide the same formal qualifications.

A number of rules came into being through centralized educational policy decisions in order to level out the differences in students' performance—or in any case reduce obvious shortcomings in their knowledge and skills. These rules concentrated mainly on ways of helping slow learners and the handicapped. They allowed the establishment of remedial classes, reading classes, school-readiness classes and observation classes. They also made

possible to establish special learning clinics in the schools to which students could be sent individually for limited periods without having to leave their regular class as a result. They also meant that so-called companion teachers could be provided for students within the framework of normal instruction. A companion teacher is generally a person with training in special education who works in a class together with its regular teacher, mainly with students who have difficulties.

By the mid-1970s, special education in the compulsory school system had expanded to the point where for each 3—4 regular teachers, there was usually one full-time special teacher. Discussions and studies of these problems began in earnest during 1971—75. The result was a number of parliamentary decisions in 1976 and 1977, which mainly meant that responsibility for placing students in various types of groups would rest with the individual school and municipality. This responsibility also included organizing help and remedial measures for students who are slow learners or who otherwise or for other reasons require special assistance or encouragement. The same applies generally to placement of students in classes and instructional groups, how teachers work with various groups of students, distribution of instruction hours in different grades and levels, distribution of course contents at various age levels, etc.

So far these rules apply only to compulsory education. The question of a similar decentralization of guidance and decision-making for upper secondary education is being investigated by special government-appointed commissions.

At upper secondary level, student participation in decision-making has been sought by means of so-called joint councils, which have existed in all upper secondary schools since 1969. The council includes the principal (headmaster), teachers and pupils. The councils have an advisory function. In the comprehensive school, joint

councils are not compulsory. But most comprehensive schools have established such bodies, assigning them the same functions as those in the upper secondary schools. Since 1978, all primary and lower secondary classes in the comprehensive school also have a class council consisting of the class teacher and the students, for discussing matters of common interest to the class. The influence exerted by joint councils and class councils is often determined by local factors. In some schools they appear to have contributed actively to increasing student involvement and influence on the way the school operates. In other schools it is claimed, mainly by the students themselves, that they lack any real influence.

Education for Adults

Adult education has long traditions in Sweden. The first folk high schools came into existence in 1868. Adult education associations affiliated with special-interest, trade union or political organizations emerged around the turn of the century. But it was during the 1960s that adult education became a major factor in Swedish educational policy. There were many reasons for this. The almost explosive growth of the regular school system resulted in a generation gap—the adult population who carried the main economic burden for the country had not received anywhere near the educational benefits now available to young people. As late as 1970, nearly two-thirds of the 30—35 age bracket had only seven years of elementary schooling plus whatever vocational training they had received. It was considered only fair to demand that the older generation, too, should be entitled to more education. Adult studies were also viewed as an essential asset to continued national development, not only in economic

terms but also to provide deeper roots for democracy and cultural life.

There are more than 100 *folk high schools*. They are owned by county councils, popular movements, other organizations or special associations. Their objective is to provide a general civic education, with the special aim of giving students an insight into their responsibilities as human beings and as members of society. Each school designs its own program. Folk high schools try to meet educational needs not fulfilled by the regular schools. In 1977, Parliament approved legislation on the general aims of folk high schools and the structure of State subsidies to them. This decision confirmed the local freedom of the schools and even expanded it somewhat.

There are about ten nationwide *adult education associations* that operate study circles entitled to State grants. The associations have links with various organizations and popular movements, e.g. blue-collar and white-collar trade union movements, political parties and churches. The adult education associations collaborate with libraries, folk high schools and other cultural institutions. Their study circles include a broad range of subjects. These subjects vary considerably from one association to another.

Municipal adult education aims at providing preparation for continued studies or an occupation. About 30% of the participants are taking comprehensive school courses, 40% are in upper secondary courses, and 30% are in special vocationally oriented courses. Municipal adult education is provided, in principle, within all of Sweden's municipal districts. But regulations requiring a certain minimum number of participants per class result in a concentration of courses in larger population centers.

Labor market training aims at providing vocational education to people who are unemployed or in danger of losing their jobs. It is sponsored by the National Board of Education both at 48 training centers and within the

regular educational system. The main emphasis within labor market training programs is on manufacturing occupations.

One general objective in planning adult education is to encourage people with little schooling from their early years, or with special educational needs, to take part in studies. Every employee is legally entitled to take a leave of absence from his or her job to pursue studies. A person may then be eligible for a special adult study grant. Students in labor market training programs receive training allowances.

Universities and Professional Colleges During the 1950s and 1960s

The universities and professional colleges in Sweden are based on traditions which they essentially share with similar institutions on the European Continent. As recently as 25 years ago, the universities (then only two in number, Uppsala and Lund) were divided into the four classical faculties: theology, law, medicine, and liberal arts.

Besides the universities there were "colleges" of university type (Stockholm, Göteborg) and a number of specialized professional colleges existed. The total number of students in Swedish higher education in 1950 was about 15,000.

During the unemployment of the 1930s university-educated people, too, had difficulty finding work. A government-appointed commission's study of these conditions, carried out at that time, expressed a point of view which was to underlie the planning of the higher education system until the mid-1970s. Access to most university study programs was to be automatic for all applicants who fulfilled basic requirements, while admissions to specialized professional colleges would be limited.

The Social Democratic Government which took office in 1945, following dissolution of the wartime coalition Government, quickly made known its view that higher education and research would be of major importance to Sweden in the future. The strengthening of higher education resources which took place during the following decade, among other things as regarded positions for younger university teachers, was a good platform for the rapid growth in university and professional college enrollments which occurred from the mid-1950s until the end of the 1960s. A study commission on universities, appointed in 1955, came to establish the framework for developments during that period. Nevertheless, no one could foresee the multitude of problems that were to be caused by an expansion which meant that eventually between one fourth and one third of each age bracket went on to post-secondary studies, compared with 4% in the late 1940s.

Prerequisites for the decisions of the 1950s and 1960s regarding higher education were, on the one hand, economic growth, and on the other the expansion of the school system. The country's need for people with higher education grew at an unprecedented rate—this applied, for example, to doctors, engineers, teachers, and administrators. The demand was so strong that in the early 1950s, the normal pathways to higher education did not provide what was considered a sufficient number of applicants. Certain groups without the *studentexamen*, among them elementary school teachers and trained social workers, were at that time given the right to begin higher studies under certain conditions. As the school system expanded, a growing number of young people continued to universities and professional colleges, and the early 1960s saw the real beginnings of public debate on whether it would be possible for those who were then studying to find work after graduation which corresponded to their level of education.

In connection with planning decisions in 1963 and

1965, Parliament outlined the general direction of higher education policy. As previously, there was to be a sector with a limited number of places for applicants, plus a sector with an unlimited number of places. The first category mainly included clearly occupationally oriented study programs with relatively high costs per student and with limited capacity at laboratories and in educational traineeships. The open sector mainly included study programs without laboratory work or traineeships and with less clear occupational ties. This meant that there were unlimited admissions to the university faculties of theology—which nonetheless had only a modest number of applicants, law, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences (in mathematics and other non-lab subjects). As previously, a specific number of applicants were to be admitted to the remaining four of the nine faculties into which the universities had been reorganized in 1964—medicine, dentistry, pharmacology, and technology.

Speaking very generally, planning was based on a major expansion of these restricted-admissions faculties to meet the country's need for doctors, engineers and so on, and to achieve a certain balance within higher education as a whole. The open sector was designed to provide everyone formally qualified for higher studies with an opportunity to pursue them, while meeting the need for clergymen, lawyers, teachers, etc.

The expansion of the restricted-admissions faculties did not, however, suffice to create a balance in relation to the wishes of applicants for study programs and the country's needs. There was an expansion in various educational programs whose admission rules and other conditions turned them into alternatives to university studies. They included training of journalists, social workers, and teachers in grades 1—6. These "non-academic post-secondary" programs were available at institutions which in many cases were granted the status of professional colleges

during the 1960s—schools of journalism, schools of social work and public administration, teacher-training colleges—without simultaneously being provided with their own research structure other than in a few cases. Furthermore, other educational institutions which recruited people of university age, such as schools for training nurses and pre-school teachers, increased their intake capacity, and the contents and lengths of their programs were adapted to new conditions and demands. They were nevertheless mainly peripheral to the deliberations on higher education which took place in the 1950s and 1960s. Colleges in artistic fields underwent a developmental process completely independent of the mainstream of higher education policy.

The three university faculties—humanities, social sciences and mathematics/natural sciences—which were the heirs of the old Liberal Arts Faculty and are indeed nowadays collectively referred to as liberal arts faculties, nevertheless expanded beyond all expectations, especially the first two. In 1960, humanities and social sciences had a total of 15,000 students. In 1964, they were divided into separate faculties. In 1970, the faculty of humanities had nearly 30,000 students and social sciences had more than 40,000. An automatic budgeting system allotted teachers' salaries for undergraduate instruction in proportion to the number of students. Major efforts were undertaken to rent and build classroom and research facilities and to expand student housing run by the student unions.

Nonetheless, in order to limit the growth in student enrollments to some extent, initiatives were taken to make higher studies more efficient and to streamline course contents. An important prerequisite for this work was that for many years, studies for the Bachelor of Arts degree at the liberal arts faculties were nominally supposed to require only 3—3½ years of full-time study. By means of a parliamentary decision in 1969, studies at these faculties were organized into well-defined programs. The purpose

was to achieve greater coherence and efficiency in undergraduate education as a whole and to improve conditions for designing the contents of study programs in keeping with national needs. Finally, the training of teachers in specialized subjects for secondary schools was reformed so that in addition to their undergraduate studies at a university, student teachers underwent a final practical-pedagogical year at a teacher-training college. A college of library sciences was established in 1972 with similar functions for those who aimed at library work

University reform policies during the 1960s also included an appraisal of postgraduate education, which had been organized in two stages: the degree of *licenciat* and the doctoral degree. In 1969, Parliament decided that postgraduate studies should require 3—4 years beyond the undergraduate degree at each faculty and should lead without any intermediary stage directly to the doctorate.

Higher Education for New Categories of Students

For a long time, university policy was based on the requirement of a *studentexamen*, a matriculation certificate based on tests taken upon completion of secondary studies, for admission to any of the faculties. As mentioned previously, regulations were waived in the early 1950s, which also made it possible for certain other groups, in limited numbers, to begin university studies. In other words, access to the so-called free faculties was only ostensibly free. The volume of students at these faculties was regulated by admissions to the then existing upper secondary school (*gymnasium*): in this way, about two-thirds of each age bracket were excluded from university studies in the mid-1960s.

A seed with great explosive power was sowed by the Government in 1965 when it appointed a commission to

work out proposals for new rules on admission qualifications and selection of students for higher education. In 1972, when Parliament approved a decision in principle on the basis of the commission's proposals, the system of an "integrated" upper secondary school had been implemented, with three-year and four-year study lines equivalent to the traditional gymnasium as well as two-year lines which in most cases were directly vocationally oriented. According to the parliamentary decision, which after additional commission studies came to be implemented in 1977 together with the rest of the higher education reform, every study line in the upper secondary school (in some cases after supplementary studies in Swedish and English), as well as other studies with equivalent aims and lengths, fulfills the general admission requirement for higher education. A person who is at least 25 years old and has at least four years of occupational experience, regardless of schooling, also fulfills the general admission requirement. On top of this there are special admission requirements—expressed as knowledge equivalent to upper secondary school courses in special subjects—for various programs and courses in the higher education system. The new rules mean that, in principle, every adult is formally entitled to begin higher studies, and the expanded system of adult education provides genuine opportunities for most people to acquire the previous knowledge required for higher education. The reform decision also includes the application of new rules for selecting students for higher education programs with limited admissions. These rules guarantee admission to applicant categories with different backgrounds, in accordance with proportional quotas. In addition to school marks, working experience and other criteria also entitle a person to qualification points.

It is not easy to assess the impact of the new admission rules after only a year or so. As time passes, the behavior patterns of those applying to higher education adapt

themselves to the prevailing rule system. The median age of those accepted into high-status study programs, in particular, has risen noticeably. Student bodies generally appear to have become more heterogeneous, even if the reformers' dream of reaching entirely new categories of students has not been realized to the extent perhaps hoped for.

The new admission rules for higher education can, to some extent, be said to be the result of reforms in the upper secondary school and in adult education. The task assigned to the 1968 Educational Commission (U68)—to make recommendations on the size, location and structure of post-secondary education—may be regarded more generally as a continuation of the intentions behind the comprehensive school and upper secondary school reforms of the 1950s and 1960s. In other words, it was not the student movements of 1968 which caused the U68 commission to begin its work, as is occasionally claimed in public debate, although obviously these events influenced both its working methods and the direction of its proposals to some extent. The ideas found in the U68 commission's main report (1973) have their origins rather in the debates of the 1960s within the white-collar trade union confederations SACO and, particularly, TCO.

It was stressed in the Government's instructions to the U68 commission that the distinction between academic and non-academic post-secondary education should no longer be applied. There should be a common fundamental approach to the activities and planning of the whole post-secondary field—the higher education system—at the same time as its various parts should, within this common approach, preserve and develop their special character. All undergraduate studies in the higher education system should prepare a person for a future occupation, even if this is not intended as its only aim. All higher education should have links with research, even if this cannot always take place in traditional forms through

local and personal links. It is obvious that the intentions of the reform implied different things for programs at the liberal arts faculties of the universities and for strongly vocationally linked programs for training nurses, preschool teachers, musicians, and so on.

In 1975, Parliament approved the principles behind the new higher education system. Within the new structure, the faculties—bearers of the academic nucleus of the previous post-secondary system—lost their role in undergraduate education. Instead, undergraduate studies are organized in study programs grouped into five vocational training sectors (technical, administrative-economic-social welfare, medical-paramedical, teaching, and cultural-informational), as well as in single courses.

The recommendations of the U68 commission also included removing another dividing line which had played a crucial part in previous higher education policy—the one between programs with restricted admissions and those with open admissions. This proposal was based on a common fundamental approach in principle to all higher education: every part of the system should be planned with reference both to the educational needs of individuals and to national needs for trained people. An important prerequisite of the proposal to limit admissions to all higher education was that the new rules on eligibility for admission made it possible in principle for every adult to apply for higher education. Resources for higher education had to be weighed against resources available for other educational purposes, especially other study programs for adults.

The U68 commission strongly underlined that its recommendations on restricted admissions must not be interpreted as meaning that the intake capacity of every study program should be determined only by utilizing forecasts of the demand for people with such training. Instead, the total capacity of the higher education system should, as far as possible, be based on the demands of

individuals. In distributing resources to the various programs, assessments of future national needs within different occupational categories—in themselves extremely difficult to make—were only one of many factors to be taken into account.

Efforts to create greater diversity in available undergraduate programs had long been part of higher education policy. They are an even more important part of a policy which aims at reaching new categories of students. The demand for education, which after all determines the number of new students, aims at the courses and study programs which actually exist. Educational needs which are not met by any form of education remain latent. Due among other things to a declining number of new students entering the liberal arts faculties in the early 1970s, the universities had taken initiatives to create new courses to reach new categories of students. Centralized committee work led to the establishment of "technical-vocational higher education"—courses running 1—1½ years and intended for skilled workers in the engineering and other industries. Since 1977 when the new organizational system was implemented and responsibility for courses was shifted to the individual institutions of higher education, a large number of new courses have been started, responding to a variety of needs. Development of the contents of study programs and their structure has thus been a necessary complement to the new admission rules when it comes to reaching new categories of students.

A major issue in preparing the parliamentary decision of 1975 on the structure of higher education was whether open admissions should be retained within part of the system. The U68 commission's recommendations—which of course would have meant just the opposite—awakened opposition among students and within the Liberal and Conservative parties, which together with the Center party formed a new Government in 1976. Thus, in the first years of the new higher education system, open

admission was granted to a small sector, including i.a. the economics program. In 1979, Parliament decided that the same framework planning system is to be applied to the whole field of higher education. This makes it possible to limit the intake capacity of any free study program or single course.

The Location and Structure of Higher Education

When the growth of higher education accelerated during the 1950s, it was natural to plan for expansion of the existing universities at Uppsala and Lund and, above all, supplement and expand resources for higher education and research in the large cities of Stockholm and Göteborg. New faculties and professional colleges were established and the number of students grew rapidly.

At the beginning of the 1960s, the immediate prospect was an expansion within the universities and professional colleges on a far bigger scale than had thus far been envisioned. A commission on universities and professional colleges appointed in 1963 recommended the creation of university annexes (branch campuses), and Parliament approved their establishment beginning in 1967: an annex to the University of Stockholm was created at Linköping, one to Uppsala at Örebro, one to the University of Göteborg at Karlstad, and an annex to the University of Lund at Växjö. The basic idea was to relieve the pressure on student housing and teaching premises in the university towns. The most popular subjects within the faculties of humanities, social sciences and mathematics/natural sciences—in other words within the open-admissions sector—were offered at the branch campuses, which administratively remained part of their parent universities.

Resources for postgraduate education and for research

were not supposed to be located at the new centers, which resulted in questions about the link between research and undergraduate training being asked from new perspectives. Soon another problem arose: while the annexes helped reduce the pressure at the parent universities, there was an increase in new categories of students from in and around the towns with such branch campuses, who would not otherwise have applied for higher education. The imbalance between sectors with restricted and with open admissions in Swedish higher education became even more dramatic, and the significance of location in deliberating about quantitative planning became evident.

As early as the 1950s, regional development policy aspects had been taken into account in planning higher education. North of Uppsala—within an area covering more than two-thirds of Sweden's area—there were no resources for higher education and research. The first facilities were established at Umeå, where dentistry began to be taught, the immediate reason being a shortage of dentists in northern Sweden. The University of Umeå was established in 1963.

When the U68 commission examined the issue of geographical location of higher education facilities, it tried to take all significant factors into account. There was evidence of the influence the proximity factor exerted both on recruitment to higher education and on where graduates chose to live during their subsequent professional careers. Geographical proximity was, in fact, increasingly important because higher education also sought to recruit older students and because both spouses in young families were increasingly likely to have gainful employment.

At the end of the 1960s, the regional development policy debate intensified, and the economic situation of remote parts of the country became a major political issue. In 1971, Parliament decided that future expansion of higher education should take place outside the largest

urban areas—and thus outside the four biggest centers of higher education. In 1971, an institution of higher education was also founded at Luleå in the far north, to provide technical research and education there.

Parliament's decision of 1975 on reforming the higher education system was based on these conditions. The new higher education structure scheduled to take effect in 1977 included State-run institutions of higher education in 14 towns besides those which had been allotted resources for both research and higher education through earlier decisions. With two exceptions, each of these towns already had post-secondary schools or professional colleges of various kinds (university annexes, teacher-training colleges, schools of social work and public administration, pre-school teacher-training institutes, etc.) which form the nucleus of the new institutions and the starting point for future planning.

The purpose of this structure is to allow local, regional and national needs—both individual and social—to be weighed together in planning. The new institutions of higher education have already developed a broad spectrum of new courses which have turned out to be popular.

Municipal higher education is found in a large number of towns, including others besides the 21 centers which have State-run institutions of higher education. They use the facilities of upper secondary schools and often meet local or regional needs.

According to the 1975 parliamentary decision, the country is divided into six higher education regions, each with a regional board of governors. One of the main tasks of the regional boards is to be responsible for the regional aspects of higher education planning.

The traditional structure of Swedish universities gave major influence to tenured full professors, both in determining the contents of instruction and research and in the boards (senates or councils) of the universitites, and to

some extent also at national level. Thus until 1964, the Chancellor of Sweden's universities was chosen by an electoral body whose members were full professors. But students were not lacking in influence: beginning in the 1940s, bodies that included students and teachers had advisory tasks in connection with instruction. The student unions, with State subsidies, handled the construction of student housing.

When the system of university administration was reformed in 1964, the purpose was to strengthen the planning function, mainly at national level. A new central government agency, the Office of the Chancellor of Swedish Universities was created. In principle, it was given the same status as other agencies, for example the National Board of Education and the National Labor Market Board. A lay board including representatives of labor and management organizations was put in charge of the Office of the Chancellor of Swedish Universities. The Chancellor, a Government appointee, was to serve as the director-general and board chairman of the new agency. Its structure was based on the faculties, and thus excluded higher education outside the faculty system. Five faculty planning committees were established as advisory bodies attached to its board. The agency's budget included faculty appropriations covering the whole country.

The local organizational structure of the universities was to be based on a pattern common to the whole country. Centralized planning also included details of how instruction was to be organized, the subdivision into departments, and the shape of administration. Advisory bodies including student representatives gained a stronger position. In addition to the rector (president or vice-chancellor) who was chosen by the professors, each university was also given a government-appointed administrative director. Within this structure, it was considered possible to keep administrative functions separate from research and instruction.

Quite soon, other forces became part of the picture. After 1968, influenced both by events abroad and in Sweden, an experimental system was started with the aim of creating better collaboration with students and various staff categories, teachers and others, in the decision-making bodies of the universities.

The professional colleges outside the jurisdiction of the Office of the Chancellor of Swedish Universities had highly varying organizational structures during the 1960s. The teacher-training colleges were under the purview of the National Board of Education and were under civil service control through their rectors, who were Government appointees. The schools of social work and public administration, which had come into existence mainly to meet municipal needs for civil servants, had lay boards of governors including municipal representatives. Within these non-academic professional colleges, too, collaboration with students and staff developed after 1968, taking different forms depending on the wide range of conditions prevailing at the various colleges. Nursing schools and other institutions which after 1977 were to form the core of the municipal higher education system had a structure similar to that of the regular school system, and collaboration with students and staff was poorly developed.

Under the higher education reform implemented in 1977, every institution of higher education has a uniform organizational framework determined by Parliament and the Government. Within this structure, the decision-making bodies at each school have considerable freedom to shape both its programs and its organizational set-up. This decentralization can be regarded as one expression of a general trend in Sweden. It is related to a well-developed collaboration in decision-making between various groups at each institution and—above all—the creation of institutional boards of governors including representatives of the general public. These boards also include teachers, one of them being the rector of the institution,

plus the administrative director and representatives of the students and staff. Program committees—comprising equal numbers of representatives of students, teachers and the appropriate occupational categories toward which the training leads—have been created to assume responsibility for planning study programs. In other words, direct contact between the individual institution and the outside community has been guaranteed in various ways, while instruction and research *per se* as well as student and staff organizations are represented.

As mentioned previously, municipal higher education normally shares facilities with the upper secondary school. For this reason, in certain respects their local structure is coordinated with that of the upper secondary school system. But program committees exist also in municipal higher education.

As part of the decentralization of decision-making functions, the National Board of Universities and Colleges—in the reformed higher education system the new name for the Office of the Chancellor of Swedish Universities—has undergone a partial revision of its tasks. It will do less supervising of details and will instead provide more services to the institutions of higher education. At the same time, it will retain responsibility for helping bring about implementation of the intentions of Parliament and the Government, and by developing knowledge of the higher education system, lay the groundwork for decisions on the future of the system.

It will take time before the new relationship between the higher education institutions and the National Board of Universities and Colleges develops and stabilizes. This is even more true of the relations between the six regional boards of higher education—with their strong political ties—and local and national higher education bodies. The regional boards were created to meet the need for a stronger local and regional social involvement in higher education planning than the boards of each institution

could provide. So far their tasks mainly center on quantitative planning and location of courses and facilities.

Recurrent Education

During the 1960s, the general trend in Swedish education was toward a lengthening of the period young people spent in school, an increase in general subjects there, and a postponement of specialization and vocational orientation. At the same time, adult education in its various forms grew into a necessary supplement to the schooling provided to the young. During the 1970s, one topic of educational policy discussions has been how to achieve a good balance between educational programs during different periods of people's lives, viewed both from the perspective of the individual and of society. An approach has emerged which involves a conscious alternation between periods of education and periods of gainful employment or other activity. The parliamentary decision of 1975 on reforming the higher education system also states that educational planning as a whole should be based on the principle of recurrent education. This signifies an abandonment of the belief that education should preferably be concentrated into a continuous period during youth, which is then followed by an uninterrupted period of gainful employment until retirement.

There are a number of signs that a pattern of recurrent education is emerging.

Of the nearly 90% of each age bracket who now continue to upper secondary school after compulsory schooling, many first take a year or more off and then resume their studies. This is the case with about 15% out of the nearly 90%. In other words, they themselves decide in this way to alternate education and gainful employment.

There are reasons to encourage such a trend by means of various educational and labor market policy measures.

State-run and municipal adult education have created increased opportunities to alternate or otherwise combine education and gainful employment. This adult education system today has as many students as the upper secondary schools.

Nearly two million people take part each year in study circles operated by the adult education associations, a very high figure for a population of 8.3 million. These studies are, of course, limited to a few dozen hours per person and consist largely of practical and artistic subjects, but in any event they give many people the opportunity to study while holding down jobs.

Corresponding tendencies can be noted in adult education programs at the folk high schools. The number of full-year students at these institutions has not increased over the past ten years. On the other hand, since 1970 the number taking short courses has increased from about 3,000 to about 150,000 per year. A similar type of activity is the training available in small program packages at course and conference centers, under the auspices of companies and organizations. This training, too, has increased noticeably in scale. Programs of these types may be regarded as building blocks in an emerging system of recurrent education.

Even before the higher education reform of 1977, about half the new students entering the open-admissions faculties of the universities were at least 25 years old, i.e. they had alternated gainful employment and education in some way. The number of part-time students at these faculties, i.e. those normally likely to combine or alternate education and gainful employment, had also grown from only about 3% in 1970 to more than 30%. At the same faculties it had also become common for students to say they only wanted to take single courses and subjects but not work toward a full academic degree. After 1970 these

students had grown from just over 10% to about 70% of annual new registrants.

The new rules on admissions to higher education introduced in 1977, making adults with working experience eligible for higher education, and in which gainful employment entitles a person to additional qualifying points in the competition for places in study programs that cannot accept all applicants, have generally meant major changes in the age, knowledge and experience of those beginning higher studies. In the long run, the pattern of recurrent education now developing may change not only recruitment to higher studies, but also the contents of these studies and recruitment patterns on the labor market.

One of the purposes of recurrent education is to achieve a more vigorous interaction between the labor market and education. It should become possible for upper secondary and, above all, higher education to be increasingly based on the practical experiences of students themselves. Theoretical studies can, to a greater extent, consist of analyses of such experiences. Obviously with such a trend, experience from adult education will be essential to instruction both in upper secondary school and in higher education. The borderlines between adult education and regular post-compulsory education are becoming more vague, at the same time as the need for training programs of different types remains and becomes even stronger.

Labor market trends will thus have great significance for the future structure and contents of education. Technical development may lead to a polarization of the labor market and a growing gap between skilled and unskilled work tasks. A fundamental question is: What conclusions are to be drawn from this concerning the structure of jobs and the job-preparatory role of the schools? Efforts to improve the work environment and to increase employee participation in decision-making will also place special demands on education.

Strategy and Instruments of Educational Reforms

Educational Policy-Making

The preceding sections have briefly described *what* has happened in the Swedish educational reforms of recent years. It is also of interest *how* this work has been carried out, what strategy has been followed and what instruments have been used. Here is a short description of two of the most typically Swedish reform instruments: government-appointed commissions in their role as creators of reform policy, and centralized administrative agencies as the bodies responsible for implementing these reforms.

Sweden is usually regarded as having a strongly centralized educational administration. Educational reforms are often regarded as having originated at national level and being spread first to regionally and then to locally responsible educational bodies. This creates a temptation to believe that reform strategies and processes have an authoritarian, hierarchical structure.

This is not entirely true. Instead, it can be claimed that during the post-war period, educational issues in Sweden have been much more clearly rooted in public opinion and public policy than previously. An example of this is the annual parliamentary debates during 1950—1962 on the results of the experimental programs to develop a nine-year comprehensive school.

Characteristic of Sweden is the strong position enjoyed by popular movements over the past century. The blue-collar and white-collar labor movements have grown strong and now include most private and public employees. Educational issues have been widely discussed within these movements as well as within the free (dissenting) churches, the sports movement, the temperance

organizations, the consumer cooperative movement, the women's movement, the parent-teacher movement, and in various kinds of adult education organizations. The role of these popular movements and organizations as molders of opinion can hardly be overestimated. They have influenced the political parties, which in turn are behind the political decisions in Parliament and the Government. The pathway to these decisions in Sweden ordinarily goes via the government-appointed commissions. These study commissions (commissions of inquiry) have become a crucible for the creation of Swedish reform policy.

The Swedish study commission system differs in some respects from its counterparts in other countries. It is actually an essential ingredient of the political and administrative system.

The first stage in a commission is that the appropriate minister, in this case the Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs, writes instructions for its work and receives the authorization of the Government to appoint its members and secretariat.

The members of an educational commission are ordinarily of three different types: 1) parliamentary or other political party representatives, 2) representatives of interest groups within the educational system, usually teachers and school administrators, and 3) special experts in educational research and development work.

After investigative work usually lasting 2—5 years, the commission publishes its final report including recommendations for action. This customarily includes both a timetable for putting into effect the proposed reforms and a cost estimate for these measures. The series of reports published by a commission often incorporates scientific and statistical studies of the issues covered. During the reform period since 1950, a large number of doctoral dissertations on education have been written as parts of commission reports on educational matters.

The commission presents its work to the Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs, who is normally expected to send the final report and attached special studies to all public agencies affected by the work of the commission, as well as to organizations representing teachers, parents, and students, to special-interest and voluntary organizations of various kinds, e.g. the above-mentioned popular movements, as well as to municipal governments, colleges and universities affected by the commission's recommendations.

The organizations to which these publications are circulated often put in a large amount of work studying the commission report, the background material on which it is based, the recommendations it leads to, the timetable proposed for these changes and the expenses the reform is supposed to require.

As a rule, the Government subsequently presents to Parliament a bill based on the recommendations made by the commission and the viewpoints on them which it has gathered. It happens only rarely that a commission report does not result in a Government bill being submitted to Parliament. It is thus characteristic of the Swedish reform strategy that an issue which has been raised finally ends up in one form or another on Parliament's plate. Another characteristic is that the lag between the presentation of a commission report and the subsequent parliamentary decision on the same issue is comparatively short.

An additional characteristic of Swedish reform activities is the division of this process into various stages. It has thus often happened during the post-war period that Parliament has first approved a decision in principle on a reform (the best known is the decision taken in 1950 on the principles governing the future development of the school system) and then later has come back to make decisions on the details of this development. In both cases, the decisions are customarily based on commission proposals and the Government bills resulting from them.

It is not possible to go into detail here on the post-war conditions that allowed reforms to be undertaken in this fashion in two or more stages. It appears obvious, however, that the political stability prevailing in Sweden since World War II has been of great significance.

Administrative Agencies

After Parliament has reached a decision, the politicians there and in the Government hand over responsibility for implementing their ideas to the central administrative agencies, whose task is one of enforcement.

The central administrative agencies in the educational field in Sweden can most simply be compared with what other countries would call the administrative branch of the Ministry of Education. These central agencies are mainly charged with carrying out decisions by Parliament and the Government. Their tasks have been essentially administrative. During the lively reform work of the post-war period, the agencies have furthermore had to assume responsibility for giving more exact, concrete definitions to educational policy objectives, recommending solutions to goal conflicts, and generally taking care of the planning, follow-up and assessment of programs. Besides legal and economic experts, they have made increasing use of professional experts on educational, organizational and informational matters. The directors of the central administrative agencies, their divisions and bureaus are civil servants and thus, in principle, independent of changes in government. Each agency has its own board including representatives of various national interest groups on the labor market, in the social welfare field and in education.

The municipal and State educational system is administered at national level largely by two agencies, the

National Board of Education (*Skolöverstyrelsen, SÖ*) and the National Board of Universities and Colleges (*Universitets- och högskoleämbetet, UHÄ*). Primary and secondary instruction, including most vocational education, is nationally under SÖ jurisdiction. Municipal and State adult education, in-service training for teachers, and educational research and development work also come under SÖ jurisdiction at national level.

The parallel to SÖ within higher education is the National Board of Universities and Colleges. For more than 100 years, the State-run universities have been administered nationally by a University Chancellor. At first the Chancellor was an independent public official with a small secretariat, but as mentioned previously, this arrangement was replaced in 1964 by a special central administrative agency, the Office of the Chancellor of Swedish Universities. At first, only universities and certain professional colleges were under the jurisdiction of this agency. The reform of higher education decided upon in 1975 led to the creation of the National Board of Universities and Colleges (UHÄ) which also incorporates other professional colleges into its fold.

No detailed description will be given here of how the central administrative agencies work to implement the decisions of Parliament and the Government on educational matters. But two important instruments should be mentioned: educational research and development work and in-service training of teachers. Both SÖ and UHÄ receive annual appropriations for these programs on the basis of parliamentary decisions.

Nor will we examine how the reforms are carried out through the decisions of regional and local bodies. What has been described here—how the external conditions for teaching and learning have been changed—of course leads to results only if these decisions are followed up in the internal activities of the schools and institutions of higher education among their staff and students.

Places with permanent resources for higher education according to the parliamentary decision of 1975

For further information on Sweden please contact:
THE SWEDISH INSTITUTE
Hamngatan 27, P.O. Box 7434,
S-103 91, Stockholm, Sweden

The Swedish Institute is a government-financed foundation established to promote and further Swedish contact with individuals and institutions abroad and to serve as a channel for international cultural exchange. Through its various information activities the Institute endeavours to increase knowledge of Swedish society and Swedish culture in other countries. The Institute carries out its activities in collaboration with Swedish missions and organizations abroad and maintains the Centre Culturel Suédois in Paris.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

59

ISBN 91-520-0084-2